United Nations A/50/PV.44

General Assembly

Official Records

Fiftieth Session

44th plenary meeting
Friday, 27 October 1995, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Freitas do Amaral ..... (Portugal)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Moubarak (Lebanon), Vice President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

Agenda item 105 *(continued)*

Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family

Commemoration to mark the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year

The Acting President: I call on the representative of Malaysia, Mr. Razali.

Mr. Razali (Malaysia): Two days after the Special Commemorative Meeting to mark the founding of the United Nations itself, we are meeting to commemorate the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year. Both events deal in many ways with the collective future of humanity. While in youth lies our future, humanity must find sustenance and succour in a United Nations that genuinely manifests multilateralism. The themes of International Youth Year that were launched in 1985, pertaining to distributive justice, popular participation and quality of life, remain relevant as we undertake an exercise to reform and restructure the multilateral system. The youth of the world must be involved in this important exercise, as they will inherit the system.

As rightly observed and recognized, young people in all countries are both a major human resource for development and key agents for social change, economic development and technological innovation. Their imagination, ideals, considerable energies and vision are essential for the continuing development of the societies in which they live. The problems that young people face, as well as their vision and aspirations, are an essential component of the challenges and prospects of today's societies and of future generations.

We are gratified that the final draft of the World Programme of Action for Youth to the year 2000 and beyond identifies 10 priority areas: education, employment, hunger and poverty, health, environment, drug abuse, juvenile delinquency, leisure-time activities, girls and young women and the full and effective participation of youth in the life of society and in decision-making. It is also to be noted that the Programme of Action does not exclude the possibility of new priorities being identified in the future, thus giving the Programme the flexibility to take on board agreed changes.

Of the 5.6 billion people in the world, 1.03 billion are youths, and 84 per cent of them are in developing countries. Of these, over 60 per cent are in the Asia-Pacific region. This portion is expected to increase to 89 per cent by the year 2025. Another statistical indicator pertains to the global work force. Of the 2.8 billion people in the labour market world wide, over 120 million are unemployed and 700 million are underemployed. This

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information underscores the need for us to prepare appropriate responses, ranging from the providing for productive employment to addressing social problems. The final draft Programme of Action attempts to provide a broad framework to address these problems.

Malaysia's national development philosophy has continued to place people at the centre of development. This has been incorporated in the formulation and implementation of our development policies to ensure, among other things, the involvement of our youth in the nation-building process. As a progressively industrializing country, Malaysia has placed great importance on the development of its human resources. With youth making up 42 per cent of the Malaysian population, it is imperative that Malaysia prioritize the development of this valuable national asset to further develop and improve our social and economic conditions. The rapid economic growth Malaysia has experienced has brought opportunities for our people. Yet at the same time, there are also social problems, such as drug abuse and the erosion of family values.

To imbue youth with knowledge, skills and a sense of social responsibility in a changing environment, Malaysia has embarked on a plan to ensure an overall balanced and healthy development programme for youth. This programme, known as Rakanmuda, or young friend, was initiated following a study of the problems of youth in Malaysia that was commissioned by the Ministry of Youth and Sports in early 1994. This programme is designed to provide a new vision for youth. It encompasses 10 lifestyles formulated to channel the energy of Malaysian youth towards healthy, productive, interesting and fruitful activities. More than 1 million Malaysian youths have registered to participate in this programme, which has been implemented with the close collaboration of Government agencies, the private sector and non-governmental organizations.

Malaysia has also sought to develop leadership and business and technical skills among its youth through formal and informal programmes, including technology programmes and business and skill training programmes.

Not only are Malaysian youth organizations active participants in national development; they are also encouraged and given the opportunity to participate in regional and global programmes on issues of mutual concern and interest to all of us — the environment, health, human rights, and information technology, to name a few — to create awareness. Malaysian youths have been involved in exchange programmes at the bilateral and multilateral levels to promote international understanding while sharing with others our national experience of multi-racial and multi-religious society.

Youth in developing countries, including Malaysia, needs not only better health and information about health, but also access to better education and training, credit and technical assistance and technology. These concerns, if addressed, would reduce poverty, which is central to all efforts to enhance social and economic development. It is critical to have the cooperation of the international community in the pooling of technical expertise and other resources and in providing them to the development programmes for youth in developing countries. Youths, particularly those who are victims of ethnic strife, armed conflicts and lack of employment opportunities, deserve our immediate support.

Before concluding, I must underline once again the urgent need for adequate and timely means of implementation. Given the broad reach of the proposed World Programme of Action for Youth to the year 2000 and beyond, along with the vast difference between the level of development of the poorest and least developed countries and that of the highly industrialized countries, the means of implementation for the priority areas identified in it are absolutely necessary if the Programme is to be operationalized.

The Acting President: I call on the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ms. Mirbaha.

Ms. Mirbaha (Islamic Republic of Iran): I am very pleased to take part in these special meetings of the General Assembly devoted to marking the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year. This is a welcome opportunity to assess the situation of youth in the world, at the very time that the United Nations turns 50 years young. The hopes, dreams and aspirations for a better future for mankind expressed a few days ago, in this very Hall, by world leaders during the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, rest, in effect, in the hands of young people. They will be the agents of realizing those hopes and dreams. Thus, the future lies in the vision, commitment and success or failure of our efforts to deal with issues facing youth today.

A British writer said in 1845 that the youth of a nation are the trustees of posterity. This is all the more true today in our increasingly small world. The youth are

the true trustees of the posterity of our global citizenry. Thus no matter how hard we try and how many resources we devote to creating an atmosphere in which young people can develop to their fullest potential, we have not done enough. Investing in youth today is ensuring our future tomorrow. In this time of scarce resources and competing interests, it is easy to be persuaded to accord marginal importance to the question of youth in our national, regional and international efforts. International Youth Year in 1985, and these special meetings of the General Assembly on its tenth anniversary, are timely efforts to fight such tendencies.

In 1995, 84 per cent of the world youth population of 1.03 billion — people aged 15 to 24 — live in developing countries. The difficulties resulting from the North-South gap hit young people in the developing world even harder, marginalizing them even further because of the limited resources for education and training, viable employment, and health and social services. Therefore, from an international economic perspective, more favourable North-South relations, in which the great divide would stop widening and begin shrinking, would have a marked impact on the betterment of the general condition of 89 per cent of the world youth population in 2025.

My delegation notes with appreciation the efforts of the United Nations system, particularly the Commission on Social Development, in addressing the problems facing youth around the world. Prominent among these efforts are those related to concluding and adopting the draft World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond. In our opinion, the World Programme of Action constitutes a considerable step towards the improvement of the situation of youth world wide, because it provides a framework and multisectoral standards for both policy-making and implementation at the national, regional and international levels. Naturally, Governments should work with young people and their grass-roots organizations at the national level to develop responses and strategies for dealing with the particular issues facing them that are appropriate to their own historical background and cultural heritage.

The 10 priority areas identified by the draft World Programme of Action for Youth constitute the conceptual framework of these efforts. The priority areas identified in the World Programme of Action are education, employment, hunger and poverty, health, environment, drug abuse, juvenile delinquency, leisure time activities, girls and young women, and full and effective participation of youth in the life of society and in decision-making. We note that the three themes of International Youth Year — participation, development and peace — are at the core of each of the 10 priority areas and of their principal issues and specific objectives and of the actions proposed.

Education is identified as the first priority, and perhaps the prerequisite, for social development. Unfortunately, the economic situation and dire lack of resources in many developing countries have seriously hampered the promotion of educational opportunities. Many young people are forced to leave school and join the labour force in order to survive. The education of girls and young women is especially crucial in guaranteeing them gainful employment opportunities. Indeed, education is the single most effective factor in improving the quality of life of the whole family, as the parents are the child's first educators.

Throughout the last decade, the Islamic Republic of Iran has adopted numerous constructive measures in this regard, and their impressive results are recorded in official international statistics. Foremost among these successes are the increase in the number of literate women, the high percentage of women in higher education, and the almost equal school enrolment of boys and of girls.

In this connection, the role of our National Organization for the Intellectual Growth of Children and Young Adults is of particular importance in Iran. This organization, which has branches all over the country, is devoted to providing non-formal education to children and young adults to foster their intellectual growth, spirit of search and public participation. A pilot programme has been in place in Tehran for the past five years in the area of leisure-time activities for youth. This programme, which has focused mainly on inner-city youth, includes sports complexes of different kinds, time-sharing public computer centres and cultural facilities throughout the capital. Other municipalities throughout the country are gradually following suit and establishing similar community programmes.

The global recession has been a major factor behind world-wide unemployment, particularly in developing countries. This constitutes yet another critical area of concern that has affected youth more than other segments of the population. Poverty and unemployment isolate and marginalize the young, preventing them from becoming independent and establishing families, thus leaving them

few options, of which the most tempting is to resort to social ills such as drugs, violence or crime to earn a living.

As a result, today many young people face the debilitating problems of poverty and isolation, and have lost their faith in the future. For these critical reasons, the creation of employment opportunities and the full integration of youth into society should be given priority in all national youth policies and programmes. Young women and young men share these problems, and others. The social network of a country must offer sufficient provisions for young women, including child care, so mothers of young children can participate in work and education.

Another major area of concern is the vulnerability of young people to drug abuse. Sadly, in today's world, the consequences of widespread drug abuse and trafficking, particularly among young people, are all too apparent. The international community places particular emphasis on reducing the demand for, and supply of, illegal drugs. To this end, national initiatives and measures to combat illicit trafficking must be fully supported and reinforced at the national, regional and international levels.

While emphasizing regional and international cooperation in implementing the mandates of international drug conventions, my country has additionally committed itself to fight strongly against narcotic drugs, placing the highest priority on drug control measures. These measures include law enforcement training for combatting illicit drug trafficking, treatment and rehabilitation of drug abusers, and public education on the issue.

Young people are among the most vulnerable segments of the population. They naturally seek stimuli, ideologies, dreams and hopes, and are highly susceptible, therefore, to social ills in their tendency to look for change and to experiment. The family and other informal control groups provide the necessary protection for them against social evils, and, at the same time, help them to pursue a physically and morally healthy social life.

In the Islamic Republic of Iran, except for juvenile delinquents who commit capital offenses and other heinous crimes, young people do not go through the formal criminal justice system and do not carry the label and stigma of criminality for the rest of their lives. Their cases are adjudicated with a view to their reintegration into the community through a network of community-based half-way houses, and vocational training centres where they receive counselling, formal education and job training.

Most of the social complications discussed here can be attributed to an erosion of moral and religious values in our societies. The world, particularly youth, is suffering from a moral crisis which, in many societies, is of immense proportion. To avert this crisis of identity, we have to respond to the spiritual needs of young men and women as well as to their temporal needs.

The Islamic Republic of Iran strives to create a suitable environment for the moral, educational, intellectual and physical growth of its youth. In 1992, the Supreme Council for Youth was established to formulate and implement specific programmes based on prevailing needs and priorities, in order to deal with issues concerning youth. The President of the Islamic Republic of Iran actively chairs this policy-making Council. In spite of the short time this Council has been in existence, integrated policies have been adopted to address the needs of young people. Some of the key policies which have been formulated with the participation of young people themselves are as follows: design and implementation of over 50 large-scale field research projects to identify the problems facing youth in Iran today and to make policy suggestions about strategies to deal with them; establishment of a comprehensive data bank based on over 300,000 books, articles and university theses on various issues relating to youth; adoption of a Youth Training and Educational Charter, to serve as the highest policy document of the Islamic Republic of Iran for the cultural and educational advancement of the young Iranian generation, and compilation of over 2,000 multisectoral actions for the realization of this goal; provision of interest-free loans to start families to young people who would otherwise be financially unable to do so; establishment of youth councils in all provinces, aimed at extending the implementation of policies and programmes envisaged for youth across the country. The Youth Training and Educational Charter of 1992 in Iran, and the serious implementation of its programme of action are believed to have been an important factor in the gradual decrease in the youth unemployment rate, the increase in the literacy rate, and the increase in social and health services to youth.

In conclusion, although the main responsibility for the implementation of the objectives and actions set by the draft Programme rests with national Governments, one should not lose sight of the fact that these ambitious targets cannot be attained by one Government alone, particularly when the available resources are limited. Therefore, a new partnership needs to be initiated with the involvement of major actors, including Governments,

international organizations, non-governmental organizations and the private sector. International cooperation in this regard should perhaps go beyond policy-level issues and concentrate primarily on ways and means implementing the Programme of Action in terms of exchanges of information on research and studies, and technical cooperation.

The Acting President: I should like to inform the Assembly that the representative of Suriname has requested to participate in the debate on this item. Inasmuch as the list of speakers was closed yesterday, may I ask the Assembly whether there is any objection to the inclusion of this delegation in the list of speakers?

I see none. Suriname is, therefore, included in the list.

I now call upon Mr. Christos Messis, Vice-Chairman of the Governing Council of the Cyprus Youth Board.

Mr. Messis (Cyprus): At a time when our interdependent world is becoming a global village owing to the tremendous rate of technological advancement, our young people face vexed questions which must be addressed nationally, regionally and globally. The tenth anniversary of International Youth Year provides us with an excellent opportunity to review the achievements thus far and to find answers to the new challenges of the twenty-first century. The serious problems faced by the youth of our world concern us all because the responsibility belongs to everyone.

Despite the notable improvements that humanity has achieved in many areas, there is still much to be done regarding youth. There are still many countries where starvation, illiteracy, poverty and war continue to exist, resulting in suffering, especially among the young. At the same time, in countries where peace and prosperity prevail, drugs, unemployment and juvenile delinquency vigorously strike the new generation. This describes the tragic situation faced by the youth of our planet. Youth problems are different from country to country, from nation to nation and from one social group to another. One, therefore, cannot rely on any single approach for their solution. Furthermore, the complexity and heterogeneity of youth greatly exacerbate the obstacles and difficulties in our efforts to improve the present situation.

I would like to refer, as an example, to my own country, the Republic of Cyprus, which is a small country with an area of 3,500 square miles, a population of 700,000 people and a prosperous society. In Cyprus, where the level of education is very high and unemployment is almost non-existent, the continuing occupation of 37 per cent of its area and the uprooting of one third of its population due to the Turkish invasion of 1974, continue to have their profound and disastrous effects on the youth of Cyprus.

The population in the occupied part of my country, which was forcibly uprooted, has temporarily been accommodated in cities and refugee settlements in the free areas of the Republic. This has had, and continues to have, very negative effects on the social behaviour and the way of life of the youth of Cyprus, who are now forced to live in relatively crowded and unfamiliar city dwellings. The social changes that have taken place since 1974 have upset the institutions and customs of the society of Cyprus, which is based on strong family units. The psychological effects of the invasion and continuing occupation of Cyprus are unavoidably devastating. The influence of the economic, social and psychological factors of the invasion has been especially visible in the young, who are a vulnerable social group. As a result, the new generation of Cyprus finds itself facing dangers and complex problems.

Despite all these adverse factors, prudent Government policies, implemented through the involvement and direct participation of youth organizations in the decision-making process in the years that followed the tragic events of 1974, have enabled us to overcome some of the problems and to heal some of the wounds. The strong traditional family ties that are the very fabric of our society have contributed to the easier adjustment of our youth to the new circumstances created by the invasion of 1974.

Furthermore, through the tremendous efforts of the people and the Government to overcome the sufferings, a few positive developments also took place. Some examples are the high level of education, the creation of institutions and bodies for youth, and especially the noticeable increase in social awareness. These beneficial results of the youth of Cyprus were only achieved in cases where young people were given the opportunity to get involved and participate in decision-making centres dealing with issues related to them. Thus, the cornerstone of our policy has been to ensure that our youth should not feel marginalized or alienated from the rest of the body politic.

Undoubtedly, recognition by society of the competence, the reliability and the rights of the new

generation are prerequisites for success in any effort aimed at its welfare. This is primarily initiated through the participation of youth in the decision-making process and in the implementation of agreed Government policies. Without this participation, even the best and highly financed programmes will remain ineffective and non-applicable.

The new generation is the global hope for a better future. The young people of the world have both the knowledge and the ability to meet today's challenges. In this respect, the modern technological era of enhanced education in electronic information has a substantial contribution to make. We agree with the statement made today by the youth delegates that youth are not the problem, they are the solution. In our opinion, what needs to be done is for society, without prejudice, and going beyond declatory statements, to give youth what rightfully belongs to them and what they really deserve. This is the only universal approach aiming at giving youth and humanity itself a chance for a brighter future on our planet in the coming century.

The Acting President: I now call on Mr. Armando Arteaga Tenorio, Youth Representative of Mexico.

Mr. Arteaga Tenorio (Mexico) (*interpretation from Spanish*): First of all, we would like to express our support for the statement made by the representative of Ecuador on behalf of the Rio Group. We believe that it is very important that the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations has coincided with the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year, since this is a particularly appropriate time to reflect on the contradictions and problems confronting youth at the end of the millennium and to seek different ways to meet the challenges shared by the international community in this field.

The expectations of the new generations of youth have been affected drastically by changes at the end of the century. The traditional problems that have been facing young people over the past two decades, such as unemployment, the need for education and vocational training, drug abuse, delinquency or the heartbreaking effects of hunger and poverty, have all increased.

To these growing trends can be added the emergence of so-called problems of modern life, including large-scale migrations mainly of young people, the emergence and growth of AIDS and environmental devastation, which make it clear that we are living in a fragile world with limited resources.

Similarly, the messages of violence reaching the youth of today have increased considerably as compared to the messages young people received only 10 or 15 years ago. This, combined with the effects of marginalization and low expectations, contributes to the emergence of increasingly violent societies. Thus, mainly in large urban areas, new generations are losing the ability to be shocked at the problems affecting community life. This is what some critics have come to call the value crisis of generation X.

This all underlines the crucial importance of the United Nations appeal to Governments to introduce youth policies with an integral and forward-looking approach. We believe that the priority areas of the draft World Programme of Action include viable possibilities in the search for solutions to the problems to which the Programme refers.

We would like to make a few comments on the way it is implemented and mention the importance of considering the following strategies. First, the constant promotion of the participation of youth as a group, with shared responsibility, in the design, implementation and assessment of national programmes that will generate alternative strategies for youth development. Second, the strengthening of institutional coordination of the competent entities in each Government from within, in order to provide for coordination in target regions or groups in respect of integral and complementary programmes. Third, guarantees that youth-oriented actions will continue by incorporating the principal concepts of the Programme in the proper legal and regulatory framework. Fourth, the development of a strong communications policy in the electronic and printed media, so that in addition to informing and providing guidance on alternative solutions to the problems, dialogue with young people and participation by them will be broadly based. Fifth, the promotion of research on an ongoing basis so that the provisions of the Programme in different spheres of action can be gradually adapted and respond to changes in the regions, age groups, or the nature of the specific problems.

In Mexico, there are three specialized programmes dealing with youth. In addition, the Government targets youth in all programmes in the public administration. In this way, policies in education, employment, health,

justice, training, culture or recreation have a direct impact on the young population.

Since the present administration took over, youth policy has been strengthened. Thus, in the Legislature, there has been support for the establishment of youth committees in the Chamber of Deputies and Senate respectively, as well as in the Assembly of Representatives of the Federal District and seven local congresses.

As regards the draft World Programme of Action for Youth Towards the Year 2000 and Beyond, the Government of Mexico will be studying and discussing its contents in the youth committees in both the legislature and the executive.

Finally, I would like to point out that we are aware that the attainment of the integral development of youth depends on the same factors that define the economic, political and social lives of nations. The problems of new generations are only a reflection of the problems of society at large but seen from a medium-term and long-term perspective. This means that we must think about the world, not in terms of something we have inherited from our parents, but as something on loan for our children.

The Acting President: I now call on the representative of Bangladesh, Mr. Ziauddin.

Mr. Ziauddin (Bangladesh): Socio-economic development, to be most effective, must encompass all segments of society, particularly the world's youth, which currently comprises 18 per cent of the total world population. Over 84 per cent of the world's youth live in developing countries, and over 60 per cent live in Asia. Youth comprises a very significant segment of society, and its concerns, views and problems must be given our full attention, in order to build a solid foundation for successful socio-economic growth and development for the world of tomorrow.

In 1985, International Youth Year drew attention to the growing numbers and needs of the world's youth. Ten years have passed, and profound and wide-ranging international socio-economic changes have taken place. During this decade, new challenges and unforeseen difficulties have arisen for the developing countries and their youth populations, leading to their continued overall international marginalization and socio-economic deterioration.

The 1990s have seen a renewed emphasis on social concerns, with six United Nations conferences taking place over a period of five years, each addressing fundamental social issues which are of direct concern to the world's youth. We must build upon these recent international developments by incorporating special provisions for youth and translating them into actions.

Today, in 1995, we reflect not only upon the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, but also upon the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year. At this moment, we have an ideal opportunity to bring the special problems of youth to the attention of Governments and the United Nations system, and to launch special global activities to ensure that youth and their concerns are better integrated into development strategies and activities. The preparation of a target-oriented World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond, to be implemented within a specific time-frame, is a matter of utmost priority and importance.

We are confident that the draft World Programme of Action will provide a policy framework and practical guidelines for an international partnership and development paradigm based on the mutual interest and responsibility of national Governments and the international community to improve the situation of young people. We must strive to achieve the objectives of International Youth Year and to foster conditions and mechanisms to promote improved well-being and livelihood among young people for the years to come. The World Programme of Action should ensure an increased quality and quantity of opportunities available to young people for full, effective and constructive participation in society to the year 2000 and beyond.

Effective implementation of the draft World Programme of Action will require significant expressions of commitment by organizations, institutions and the international community, and the involvement of youth from all sectors of society. Therefore, an overall system of enabling mechanisms is necessary, engaging the human, political, economic, financial and socio-cultural resources necessary for the World Programme of Action to be implemented on the national, regional and international level.

Bangladesh has taken special action to advance its youth, who comprise one third of its population. The Department of Social Services has introduced youth welfare services to help solve the problems faced by unemployed young persons, school dropouts and

homeless youths. In view of the dimension and importance of the problem, a separate Ministry of Youth has been established. A national youth policy has been adopted to promote and ensure the rights of youth, particularly in the areas of education, skills development, employment, and participation in community development activities.

Special emphasis has also been placed on promoting and ensuring the active participation and development of girls and young women. In Bangladesh, we have heavily invested in the education of the girl child through stipends, free education for female students, and an innovative programme of "food-for-education" designed specifically to address the high dropout rate prevalent among girl children.

While addressing the question of youth, we would like to underscore the importance of social values and norms and the role of the family in youth development. Society must instil in its youth the true value of traditions and customs for a strong family, which is the basic unit of society, and which has the primary responsibility in developing youth.

Sustainable socio-economic development must mean investing in youth to enable them to take charge of their own destiny. Young people in all countries are both a major human resource for development and key agents for social change, economic development and technological innovation. Their imagination, ideals, energy and vision are essential for the continuing development of the societies in which they live. The problems that young people face as well as their vision and aspirations are an essential component of the challenges and prospects of today's societies and future generations as well. The ways in which the challenges and potentials of young people are addressed by policy will influence current social and economic conditions and the well-being and livelihood of future generations.

Up until this time, the rights of young people have not received the same deserved attention from the United Nations system as have other groups of the population. Young people in all parts of the world, living in countries at different stages of development and in different socio-economic situations, aspire towards full participation in the life of society, as provided in the United Nations Charter. Relevant United Nations agencies and programmes, therefore, need to intensify their efforts for the development of youth.

With this session, Bangladesh sincerely hopes for a successful conclusion of the formulation phase of the draft World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond. It would be a good beginning. Upon its adoption by the fiftieth session of the General Assembly, the World Programme of Action will enter its second and perhaps most vital phase — that of full and timely world-wide implementation to complete the process. Bangladesh gives its full endorsement to the draft World Programme of Action and underscores the need for concerted action and cooperation at all levels. With this, the international community will enter a new international era — one in which the overall socio-economic situations of youth and the societies in which they live will see continued improvement through the realization of their development goals. This should be our solemn pledge, because today's youth are our future.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Iqbal Haider, Senator of Pakistan.

Mr. Haider (Pakistan): We are here to mark the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year. This is an important occasion to review the progress made so far and to address the challenges which still lie ahead of us.

In the last 10 years, greater awareness has been created concerning the problems of youth. However, action-oriented focus on youth world wide is still weak. The task before us is to realize the crucial importance of this subject and design strategies so that the youth of the world in the next 10 years emerge as both contributors to and beneficiaries of our societies.

Young men and women of today, as the Assembly would agree, are leaders of tomorrow. Their conditions determine the strengths and weaknesses of society as a whole. With ill-fed, uneducated and untrained youth, we cannot hope to build a progressive and viable community. Youth need a vision for the future and an environment in which they can attain their full growth and development.

The conditions of youth all over the world are precarious. In the developing countries, the aspirations of youth remain unfulfilled. The majority of them are illiterate, unemployed and outside the mainstream of social and economic life. Deprivation at home forces them to migrate to other countries to seek employment. Structural adjustment programmes weaken the capacity of various countries to allocate sufficient resources to address the problems of youth.

The labour markets are overcrowded, and in the years to come the pressure created by people looking for jobs will increase. According to the International Labour Organization, more than 100 million new jobs will have to be created to absorb the growing number of young people in developing countries. In addition, young people already in employment are exposed to the physical and psychological risks of social exclusion and marginalization.

In the developing countries there are very few primary and secondary schools. Opportunities for further education are restricted to small segments of the population. The absence of universal health care is compounded by the problems arising from the use of tobacco and other addictive drugs. Youth in any society is one of the groups most vulnerable to the hazards of disease, violence and death. Complex problems arising from poverty, unemployment, migration, urbanization, transition in the family structure, the erosion of traditional values and inadequate social support systems have led to an increase in juvenile delinquency.

For the past two years, the Commission for Social Development and the Economic and Social Council have been engaged in extensive negotiations aimed at finalizing the draft World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond. The draft document that has so far been agreed to rightly identifies education, employment, hunger and poverty, health, the environment, drug abuse, girls and young women and the effective participation of youth as the most critical areas of concern for societies, Governments and the international community. To achieve desired results in these areas, we need to design and implement policies and programmes, at the national and international levels, in a coordinated manner. The emphasis should be on the integration of youth, and not on ad hoc fragmentary and piecemeal measures.

In international forums, whenever a specific issue — for instance, youth — is taken up, one witnesses a tendency to analyse the problem and to suggest solutions in isolation. We must realize that youth, women, the indigent and other vulnerable groups are all part of an indivisible whole requiring a holistic and comprehensive approach. In this process, some groups have to be identified for special attention and support. This must be done in the overall context of macroeconomic planning and development, a microeconomic framework, a social milieu and a favourable international environment.

We believe that the highest priority should be given to education for all. This would require not only reform of education systems but also greater stress on training in various skills and technologies, and wider participation of the private sector and all sectors of civil society. Education is an area in which international support can play a pivotal role in long-term investment in the future of youth. By educating our young people, we can shape a society that is more productive and socially responsible. This would also ensure meaningful interaction between youth groups all over the world. Education can be used as a tool to inculcate values which can prepare young men and women to play their part in the development process, conflict resolution and peacemaking. Education in the field of human rights will be invaluable in our campaign aimed at the promotion and protection of human rights.

The next important area is the generation of productive employment. We need to strengthen or create mechanisms to give young people easier access to credit and thus encourage them to start businesses and enterprises. Governments must create effective demand if employment is to be provided in the production sectors and in the marketing of goods and services. Young men in developing countries face the additional problems of seasonal unemployment, disguised unemployment and underemployment. These problems can be solved through Government intervention and international assistance programmes.

In the field of health, the aim should be to provide universal health care. As this may be a tall order for many countries, it is necessary, first, to concentrate on basic health services. Primary health care, combined with sanitation and the provision of clean drinking water, will go a long way to prevent disease and illness among young people. In the developing countries, large populations are threatened by malaria, cholera and typhoid. Insufficient attention is being given to the elimination of these diseases. Drug abuse is a serious menace, which affects youth adversely. Education and rehabilitation programmes should be strengthened to save young people from this scourge.

The overarching concern is widespread poverty and hunger in the developing countries. One billion people in the world live in conditions of abject poverty. Young people are affected directly by these conditions, which stymie their growth and reduce their participation in economic and social sectors. We must therefore redouble our efforts to eradicate poverty, in pursuance of the commitments made at Copenhagen. There can be no short-cut to the eradication of poverty among youth.

While the primary responsibility for the eradication of poverty rests on national Governments, we must adopt a global strategy to eliminate poverty, which, ultimately, affects both developed and developing countries.

Social integration of youth must be based on universal respect for human rights. The most vulnerable group among youth are young girls and women, who are exposed to various forms of discrimination. Many taboos still bar their full participation in economic and social life. These barriers have to be removed through determined efforts at the highest policy-making levels and at the grass-roots.

The Government of Pakistan, under the leadership of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, accords priority to the problems of youth. Young men and women have always supported the Pakistan People's Party because of its progressive manifesto. We have always involved youth in decision-making by encouraging their participation in all political processes.

The Pakistani Government's $8 billion Social Action Programme addresses the urgent needs of the population, including youth, in the areas of basic education, primary health care, nutrition, water supply and sanitation. The main objectives of this programme are to eradicate poverty, redress gender inequities, encourage rural development and provide environmental protection. The central plank of the Social Action Programme is a massive spread of primary education, with accelerated enrolment of girls. In one year alone, 10,800 new primary schools have been established in various parts of Pakistan. Thirty-four thousand new schools are being opened. To achieve our objective of universalizing primary education by the year 2000, we have increased the allocation to education by 2.5 per cent per annum.

A literacy commission will open 10,000 non-formal basic education and literacy centres in a year's time. Five education foundations have been established to promote public-private partnership on a matching-grant basis. Vocational and technical education is also receiving attention with a view to equipping school-leaving youth with marketable skills. Sixteen universities have introduced self-financing schemes in the disciplines of technology and sciences. An Open University with a network throughout the country is imparting education in skills, through distance-learning programmes, and is granting diplomas and degrees, from basic to post-graduate levels.

A category of entrepreneurs known as "created entrepreneurs" is being developed with the help of non-governmental organizations. An integrated package of services in this regard includes promotion of self-employment, information and exposure, credit and venture capital, training and marketing development. Credit facilities are being extended to youth through banks, leasing companies and small business corporations.

Special emphasis is being given to female education and health care in Pakistan. Sixty per cent of the funds of our Social Action Programme have been allocated to female literacy. In addition, under the Prime Minister's national health workers' scheme, 100,000 girls are being trained to provide a variety of services encompassing health, education and population welfare. Seventy per cent of the new schools planned over the next three years will be for girls. Some 932 women's development projects include income generation, technical know-how, vocational training, computer literacy and health care programmes.

The Government of Pakistan is also implementing plans to safeguard the rights of young offenders, and to ensure their reformation and rehabilitation. The Government has introduced a Child Offenders Act in Parliament, which would ban death sentences and harsh punishment for juvenile delinquents under the age of 16.

All these measures undertaken by the Government of Pakistan require consistent and determined efforts, participation of the private sector and non-governmental organizations and enhanced support from the international community. Resources will play a key role in determining the success of programmes aimed at the development of youth and their integration into society. The draft World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond provides a starting-point and an excellent basis for cooperation. However, international efforts should not be limited to policy level debates, research and data collection. The answer lies in technical cooperation and training programmes at the operational level. Enhanced international technical assistance and advisory services can decisively strengthen national capacities and the institutional basis for supporting national plans and strategies designed to solve the problems of youth.

The Acting President: I now call on the representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mr. Hamida.

Mr. Hamida (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) *(interpretation from Arabic)*: First of all, I should like to mention the commemoration by the Libyan people yesterday of the anniversary of the largest exile operation the Libyan people was the victim of at the hands of the Italian fascists. More than 6,000 Libyans were taken from the bosoms of their families and exiled. Their destiny is unknown to this day. Among the exiles were many young people. They were all exiled for no crime, simply for resisting fascism and struggling for national independence.

The celebration of the International Youth Year in 1985 and our commemoration today of the tenth anniversary of that year is an expression of the United Nations' continuing interest in youth, which started in 1965 by the General Assembly's declaration on the need to imbue youth with the values of peace, mutual respect and understanding between peoples.

The number of young people in the world today is estimated at over one billion, that is to say 18 per cent of the total population of the world; those young people constitute the principal effective force for social change and socio-economic development.

Youth today face grave problems, especially hunger, limited education and training opportunities, limited employment opportunities and limited access to health and social services. This has led to the spread among the young of dangerous phenomena such as drug abuse, juvenile delinquency and violence.

Regardless of the progress achieved by mankind in various areas, prosperity has not embraced all peoples or all social groups. The gap is ever widening between the poor and the rich and between the developing and the developed countries. In the world today, more than 120 million people still live in abject poverty and more than 120 million are officially unemployed, not to mention off-the-books unemployment. A large number of the unemployed and the poor are young people, many of whom are highly qualified and well-educated.

The adverse socio-economic situation in most countries, especially in the developing countries, has impacted on the lives of all social groups, including the young who have been the victims of unemployment, drug abuse, prostitution and the drift towards violence. Such a situation calls for urgent intervention and the putting in place of national policies and plans that would mobilize all available resources and capabilities in addressing and remedying these problems.

The problem of youth unemployment, which has worsen in recent years, should be accorded a high priority. The influx of young people into the labour market has led to the emergence of acute social problems; rapid advances in many scientific and technical areas have posed new challenges that must be faced by the education and training systems if youth unemployment is to be addressed properly and prevented from giving rise to many social ills, such as marginalization, poverty and delinquency.

Consequently, it is necessary, not only to provide education opportunities, but also to reform the educational content of school curricula by focusing on the eradication of technical illiteracy, teaching the young moral and humanitarian values and encouraging them to acquire new skills. This should be at the top of the national priorities of all countries.

The young are part of society. The problems that face them can be addressed only through the adoption of a well-integrated socio-economic approach. The convening of the social summit in Copenhagen in the first quarter of 1995 afforded the international community the opportunity of adopting an integrated programme of action for the achievement of socio-economic development for all classes of society.

A top priority of the programme has been the objective of eradicating poverty from the world as well as the commitment, on the national level, to take decisive action and on the international level to cooperate in the common endeavour to achieve that objective by focusing, both in policies and in action, on dealing with the root causes of poverty and on satisfying the human needs of all.

The adoption of prompt measures to implement the undertakings agreed at the Social Development Summit will have positive results in the interests of youth and ensure their full participation in the development and advancement of their societies.

In view of the fact that young people are a positive force in effecting change and development in society, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya has devoted special attention to youth from the earliest age. Since we believe that education is the primary requirement for any society that looks forward to the contribution of new generations, we have instituted free education at all levels. Since the education and raising of children and young people depend on a sound family structure, Libyan law contains

many provisions that protect the family and strengthen its cohesion. Proceeding from our belief that a healthy environment is important for the individual, we provide health services without cost to all our citizens.

These economic and social advantages of the Libyan people are threatened and obstructed by the unjust sanctions imposed by the Security Council under pressure from certain major Powers. These sanctions have impacted adversely on all classes of Libyan society, and have caused material loss which has amounted, so far, to over $10 billion, not to mention the loss of life as a result of road accidents and of long delays for those who seek medical treatment and recuperation abroad.

The absence of a favourable international environment of mutual respect between States, of willingness to settle disputes by dialogue and negotiation, of respect for the cultures, traditions and conventions of other nations instead of imposition of certain values and traditions on other peoples is bound to lead to more problems, suffering and tensions. Let us try to bequeath to our youth a world in which justice, peace and freedom would prevail, a world that would be free from poverty, disease, war and conflicts.

The Acting President: I now call on the Permanent Representative of Tunisia, Mr. Abdellah.

Mr. Abdellah (Tunisia) *(interpretation from Arabic):* It gives me great pleasure on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year at a time when Tunisia, like other Member States, celebrates the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, to recall the esteem and admiration expressed by President Zine Al Abidine Ben Ali when he addressed the General Assembly in 1989. These are feelings Tunisia has always had towards the United Nations with its laudable efforts to realize the aspirations of mankind, and of youth in particular, after progress, security and peace.

The support the United Nations has always extended to Tunisia in its struggle for liberation and the support provided by the Organization's specialized agencies to our country in its development endeavour, strengthen our devotion to the purposes and principles of the Charter and our determination to work for the achievement of its goals. This is a stance that found expression, among other things, in our repeated participation in the Organization's peace-keeping operations in many regions of the world.

Since its independence in 1956, Tunisia has engaged in a comprehensive campaign to free Tunisians from poverty, ignorance and disease, as well as to ensure dignity and to build the basis for a modern national State as part of a complete development strategy based on investment in the human factor, and aimed at building a fully-balanced society that embraces all its segments without distinction.

Since Tunisia is a relatively young country, children and young people represent two thirds of our population. Those under 20 represent 45.5 per cent of our population, while those aged 15 to 29 represent 25 per cent. Consequently, our three decades of work for development has been particularly dedicated to the promotion of young people, who are considered to be the real wealth of the country.

Tunisia has scored marked successes in this respect, especially in the areas of education, preventive and remedial health care, training and vocational guidance, with the aim of building a modern Tunisia that enjoys stability and balance. Tunisia's reforms in this new era and the presidential measures taken in favour of youth and children are in keeping with the social and educational purposes and principles embodied in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which Tunisia signed just three months after it was adopted and ratified on 11 January 1992. The fact that that date has been chosen for the celebration of our annual Childhood Festival shows the importance our country attaches to children. We can also affirm that Tunisia's youth policy, particularly since the transformation that took place on 17 November 1987, has been oriented, at the cultural, social, educational and economic levels, towards giving concrete expression to the international community's motto for the 1985 International Youth Year, namely: "Participation, Development, Peace".

Proceeding from the belief that the individual's stages of life, from childhood, to youth, to old age, are an integral whole, Tunisia has committed itself to a youth policy designed to ensure complementarity among the three stages of life, in order to ensure psychological stability and respect for the values of the community. Special attention is paid to the social sector: 55 per cent of Tunisia's budget is allocated to that area. In particular, Tunisia is concerned with education which, since independence, has taken up 7 per cent of the gross domestic product and 25 per cent of the State budget.

On that basis, our policy towards youth and children in Tunisia has been founded on certain constant values, foremost among which are: first, the education of children and young people in a manner that strengthens their sense of belonging to the Tunisian nation, their adherence to our cultural values and their loyalty to our homeland. The sense of belonging to Tunisia, the Maghreb, the Arab and Islamic world, is also encouraged.

Secondly, our aim is to prepare children and young people to lead a responsible life and prepare them for citizenship in a civil community based on justice, moderation and tolerance.

Thirdly, young people are taught about rights and responsibilities. We aim to promote a culture favourable to human rights and to sensitize individuals to their responsibilities towards themselves, towards their families and their communities. We are also determined to train them in democracy, in theory and in practice.

Fourthly, we teach children the ethic of work, personal initiative, honest gain and self-reliance.

Fifth, we prepare young people to understand and support just causes, to reject every form of exploitation, discrimination or injustice and to understand that the individual's right to live in dignity and equality is sacred, and is enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

Among the main components of Tunisia's new youth policy is the frank, healthy discussion of youth problems in order to determine young people's real needs and know their views on various national and international issues. Tunisia has opened many channels of communication with its youth through dialogue, and its policies have enabled its youth to understand their responsibilities and to gain an understanding of the workings of democracy. In this context, our President declared 1988 a Year of Dialogue with Youth and, in so doing, heralded a new era of closeness with our young people.

While dialogue with youth makes it possible for young people to participate in the life of the nation, Tunisia has also committed itself to establishing executive and consultative structures that would make it possible for young Tunisians to exercise their natural rights, make their national choices and chart a future course in a context of democracy and equal opportunities. Consequently, in 1987 the minimum age for a parliamentary candidate was lowered from 30 to 25 and in the case of municipal councils from 28 to 22. In this new era, Tunisia's Government wants the country's youth to be represented in all consultative structures and also wants to create new structures that would make it possible for young people to participate in deliberations and decision-making.

Over the last 10 years, Tunisia's youth policy has encouraged young people to be creative and innovative in science, culture and sports. Young people are rewarded with prizes, such as the President's prize for young people and the President's prize for sporting spirit, as well as with other incentives. Deserving young people of all ages and from all social sectors are rewarded in other ways as well. This includes orphans, some of whom have been fortunate enough to meet the President of the Republic on national children's day and on other religious and national holidays.

Those, then, are the perennial values underlying Tunisia's youth policy, and it is a pleasure for me to recount to the Assembly the achievements of that policy over the last decade. In the spirit of exchanging views and experiences with other States whose situations might be different from our own, I offer this summary of our national experience so that it might serve to enrich their own.

As I have said already, the sector of education is allocated about a quarter of the State budget every year. That is a constant in Tunisian policy. One out of every four Tunisians now attends school. In the past 10 years, we introduced a series of educational reforms in terms of structures, programmes and legislation. This has been crowned by a new law, passed on 29 July 1991, which stipulates that the State guarantees all school-age children the right to free education. Schooling is mandatory for children between the ages of 6 and 16, and there are sanctions for parents who fail to comply.

As for higher education, a new law has been enacted regarding university education and academic research, and a State Ministry for Scientific Research and Technology has been established, along with other existing structures in universities and research academies. Furthermore, we have established a "science city". The number of students has risen from 41,000 in 1986 to 103,000 at present. It is worth mentioning that 11.2 per cent of our young people between the ages of 18 and 24 attend university. This percentage is expected to rise to 15 per cent by the year 2000.

Side by side with measures that promote a favourable educational climate, we have modernized our

formal job training sector in order to make it possible for young people to gain the experience and skills required in today's economy and, thereby, make it possible for them to engage in gainful employment. A law on vocational training calls for the establishment of an integrated vocational training system. Furthermore, there are standardized provisions regulating initiatives to encourage job creation for young people. We now have in operation a vocational training agency and have set up a mechanism to promote and encourage small businesses.

As regards health, we provide primary care, preventive care and, above all, maternity care. We also ensure universal vaccination and family-planning services. Due to the State's efforts to improve health conditions in the country, life expectancy has increased and potable water is now available to all homes in the cities and to 80 per cent of homes in the countryside. As a result of this public health policy, we have been able, as of 1994, to eradicate all child diseases. Vaccination rates at 98 to 99 per cent are extremely high, and infant mortality has dropped from 51.6 per 1,000 in 1985 to 32 per 1,000 while child mortality, especially of those under 5 years of age, has dropped to 38 per 1,000.

At the level of social care, protection of the vulnerable sectors of society from discrimination and marginalization is one of the constants of Tunisia's social policy. Thus the disabled are guaranteed education, rehabilitation, vocational training and job opportunities. Legislation ensures that the disabled are not discriminated against in any area where their disabilities would stand in their way and prevent them from exercising their rights. Our High Council for the Advancement of the Disabled ensures their participation in the formulation of all policies that touch upon their interests.

Tunisian legislation regulates the working conditions of children and young people and protects them from economic exploitation. This law, which was inspired by international legislation, provides for a minimum working age, pre-employment medical examinations, controls night work for children, protects their health and safety in the workplace and provides for annual leave and a minimum wage.

As regards the protecting of children, Tunisian policy is committed to preserving the stability of the family, improving its living conditions and to ensuring the discharge by parents of their responsibilities towards their children. Certain legal and social mechanisms have been set up to sanction any failure on the part of the family to comply with these provisions.

We feel that the most important achievement in the area of childhood protection was the President's decision to draft a law on that subject, which Parliament is currently discussing. We feel that this law will have a very beneficial effect on Tunisian children.

In the area of recreation and culture, Tunisia has been focusing on the leisure-time institution and according to it the attention it deserves at the level of infrastructure and equipment. We have trained educators for young people at school and have created a network of specialized institutions in major cities, neighbourhoods and rural areas. These include children's clubs, youth centres, houses of culture and camping centres. We also provide bus services throughout the countryside and to rural youth clubs.

I should like in particular to mention the efforts we are making in the countryside in the "shadow areas". In the 1970s, Tunisia established an itinerant bus system to encourage cultural and sports activities in villages. Since the 1980s, we have been establishing a network of clubs in rural areas that also focus on children and young people.

Tunisia attaches particular importance to sports because they promote a sense of balance among our young people. They also promote *rapprochement* and honest competition amongst the youth of the whole world. We think also that sports help reconcile differences between peoples, in particular ethnic and religious differences. Tunisia therefore has reviewed its sports legislation in order to promote sports activities in schools and in universities.

With regard to equipment and infrastructure, Tunisia has made efforts to build swimming pools and sports stadia that can be used for a variety of sporting activities. In addition, we have been building the 7th of November sports city, which will be ready to host the fourteenth Mediterranean Games in the year 2001.

The youth of the world, as they take part in celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, look forward to a new era of solidarity, understanding, cooperation and tolerance.

The tenth anniversary of the International Youth Year today allows us to reaffirm the great responsibilities

we all bear *vis-à-vis* the problems of today's youth: unemployment, lack of training, inferior health care and malnutrition, especially now that the changes which have taken place in the world have demonstrated that, young people, in the last analysis, have a decisive role to play in the interaction and the organic interrelationship between development, democracy, internal stability and international peace.

We hope that this tenth anniversary will be an opportunity for us to renew our commitment to the world's young people and for all Member States to participate in deliberating on the draft "World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond", in order for it to be discussed, enriched and adopted.

Tunisia takes this opportunity to reiterate its support for the noble goals and guidelines contained in that draft programme, which are in keeping with our policy for the new era. Prompted by a sense of justice and responsibility towards youth, we reaffirm our confidence in their competence.

I should like to conclude by addressing myself directly to youth. I would renew the appeal that our President made on 1 July 1989 to the youth of the world:

> "The future of the world is in your hands. Please be its guarantors".

The Acting President: I call on the Permanent Representative of Morocco, Mr. Snoussi.

Mr. Snoussi (Morocco) (*interpretation from French*): Since 1959, youth has received special attention in the General Assembly of the United Nations. The role of youth in promoting the ideals of peace and mutual understanding among peoples was recognized by the international community at the very height of the cold war, when distrust and antagonism governed international relations.

Today, the contribution of youth in the building of a peaceful, just and prosperous world is more necessary than ever. At a time when the innumerable problems of development have shown us clearly the inseparable link between development, democracy and human rights, we must recognize that youth can — and must — be involved in national and international endeavours to make the needed changes for global development and the progress of all humankind.

Youth throughout the world represent a human resource of fundamental importance. It is therefore up to us to develop their potential to the utmost and to promote their social integration, an indispensable condition for the global, harmonious and secure development of peoples and societies.

It was on the basis of these principles that the international community enthusiastically proclaimed 1985 as International Youth Year, in order to strengthen among young people the ideals of peace, understanding and cooperation and to open broad prospects for them to assert themselves as the agents and beneficiaries of their societies' socio-economic development.

The decade that was just passed, under the motto of "participation, development and peace", certainly recorded some achievements, especially in making international public opinion more aware of the problems of youth. Above all, it showed the determination of youth to assert themselves and to see their aspirations translated into deeds. The effective participation of the coming generation in the management of State affairs in the economic, social and political spheres serves to ensure that they will be able to enjoy all their rights and to carry out the duties deriving from those rights.

The problems of youth are all the more topical since the world's population, on the threshold of the third millennium, is increasing in an alarming way, in so far as there are now 1.3 billion youth. While the world does have immense resources — enough to ensure the expansion and the survival of human civilization — this demographic explosion highlights the responsibility of States to respond to the pressing needs of youth and ensure their full development in a sound and well-balanced social environment.

In a world in upheaval, extremist or defeatist trends are besieging and attracting youth, thereby diverting them from the ideals of peace and equality and leading them towards frustration, insecurity and distress. It is thus up to the international community to focus more intently on these problems, which are on the increase and hence giving rise to some concern as to the future of youth — a future clouded by threats of many kinds, including conflicts, intolerance and horrifying diseases. Furthermore, the emergence of new dangers that jeopardize the well-being and the very lives of youth, such as drug abuse, violence, delinquency and terrorism, constitute a source of serious concern for States, which, in order to protect youth from these serious scourges,

must display ever greater far-sightedness, understanding and determination.

We cannot ignore the problem of unemployment which prevails, to varying degrees, in most countries, and which is often the source of many types of delinquency. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), over 100 million jobs will have to be created within the next 20 years in order to ensure that the youth of the world have appropriate jobs. This will be a challenge to all States.

Among the major changes taking place in the world, we need to give serious attention to the phenomenon of the breakdown of the family and the decline in moral values, which have grave repercussions on the stability, security and future of youth. Accordingly, it is imperative to preserve those moral values which have always played a foremost role in safeguarding the spiritual balance of young people, and in ensuring the strengthening of the family and its role as the basic cell of society?

This year, as we commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, the international community must, more than ever before, promote among youth the ideals and objectives of the United Nations, in order to preserve future generations from scourges, armed conflict — both national and international — and violence.

With the rise of new forms of racism, intolerance and xenophobia, which affect youth first and foremost, and which often give rise to unfounded hostilities, aggression, violence, and fear on their part, it is vital that broad and sustained action be undertaken by the international community to put an end to these alarming phenomena. It is our duty to promote respect among youth for other civilizations, for other races, and for national and religious ethnic diversity. This must be done through a culture that advocates equality among young people and fosters closer links among the different peoples of the world.

In this respect, we believe that the introduction of human rights into school programmes is a step of great importance which should be encouraged, because it makes it possible to develop harmonious relations between communities based on tolerance, respect for the rights and dignity of others, and mutual comprehension and understanding. Such an initiative has been undertaken by Morocco — land of tolerance — which, faithful to its traditions and its ideals of equality and fraternity, is constantly striving to inculcate these principles in future generations.

Since its independence, our country has attached greatest importance to young people, to their education, their development, and their preparation to take up their responsibilities as free Moroccans, proud of their past and ready to defend the principles and values of their country, which for centuries have made it possible for them to live and feel proud of their civilization.

We are gratified by the consistent progress made in the development of the draft World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond, which will undoubtedly contribute to overcoming the difficulties facing youth and their future.

We cannot talk about youth without raising the specific situation of young women and girls who continue in many societies to suffer the ills of a discrimination that condemns them to marginalization, thus depriving those societies of inestimable human potential.

Morocco, which in 1993 acceded to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, stresses once again the importance that the international community must attach to the fate of these young women and girls, in order to devise solutions to the specific problems confronting them.

The response to the many challenges that we must meet in order to ensure the well-being of youth demands courage, understanding, and greater solidarity and humanism. It is only through this humanism that the world will succeed in meeting the wishes of youth who aspire to a decent and worthy life, free of war, of poverty and of suffering.

The Acting President: I now call on the Honourable K. K. Chambalo, M.P., Minister for Youth, Sports and Culture of Malawi.

Mr. Chambalo (Malawi): Malawi is situated in the southern part of Africa. It is bordered by Mozambique to the south, Tanzania to the north and Zambia to the west. The demographic profile indicates that more than half the population is below the age of 25 years, clearly indicating that Malawi is a youthful nation. In spite of the numerical superiority of youth, their profile shows a lack of basic opportunities that has been compounded by the presence of a range of conditions that impinge on them, the predominant one being poverty.

Malawian youth face a host of challenges ranging from unemployment and inadequate relevant educational opportunities to HIV/AIDS, drug and alcohol abuse, and their non-involvement in decision-making, among others.

Poor formal and informal employment prospects for youth in Malawi are aggravated by inadequate relevant educational opportunities to prepare them for the challenges of after-school life. Low enrolment prior to the introduction of free primary education, and high school dropout rates, have left the bulk of the youth either illiterate or semi-literate.

The challenges Malawian youth face are not restricted only to education and employment, but extend also to factors that affect their health. There is increasing concern about the health of young people. From various research findings there is strong evidence of unprotected multiple sexual relationships among youth, leading to unwanted pregnancies and induced abortions. The 1992 Malawi demographic health survey revealed that among those under 20 years old, over one third had already entered the family formation pathway despite the risks of early pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.

The abuse of alcohol and other drugs has often implicated youth in unintentional injuries, violence and crime, thus damaging social relationships and leading to long-term illness and disability.

Mr. Ouane (Mali), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Young people have the potential to become a dynamic and positive force in shaping the future of all nations, including Malawi. Their economic, social and political empowerment is therefore paramount in addressing the challenges youth face. This, however, was not possible before 1994 in Malawi.

Malawi has had no explicit youth policy, although some programmes had been undertaken before. The previous leadership made some pronouncements about youth which became a rallying point for youth programmes; however, statements such as "Youth must be guided" and "Youth must respect their elders" only helped to silence the youth and any independent youth organizations. The defunct Malawi Young Pioneers Movement, the only youth body then, succeeded only in raising false hopes among youth through its make-believe youth programmes. The organization's political affiliation to the only party at that time totally eclipsed meaningful youth programmes which the Government attempted to implement.

The present Government of Malawi has made poverty alleviation central to its development programmes. This is in recognition of the effects of poverty on the challenges faced by young people. The poverty alleviation programme aims to enable every Malawian to have access to basic necessities and to be able to develop and exploit his or her full potential to lead a productive, dignified and creative life through social, economic and political empowerment. The vision of the programme is a transformed economy resulting in improved standards of living.

The Government has introduced free primary education to ensure that all children of school age go to school. This has resulted in a marked increase in enrolment. The Malawi Education For All programme, which the Government has also launched, will ensure that children, particularly girls, remain in school. The revision of school curricula to include more relevant subjects will enable young people to leave primary education, which is as far as many go, with skills they can use in their communities.

The ushering in of a democratic system of government in Malawi is a milestone in that it has opened up people's minds. People are free to associate with each other and form organizations of their own. This has led to the formation of many independent youth organizations working in various youth fields. Currently there are more than 10 independent youth organizations as opposed to none just a year ago. Most of these organizations were established and are managed by young people themselves.

Another milestone in the development of youth in Malawi is the development of the Malawi National Youth Policy. The Policy, which was drawn up with full consultation with young people, government organizations, the United Nations, donor agencies, the Commonwealth Youth Programme and others, aims to establish formally, clearly and firmly, as a distinct sector of government policy, the identity and status of Malawi youth and to create a direction for youth activities and programmes for various interest groups. Malawi's Policy defines youth as all young people, male and female, from 14 to 25 years of age. The Policy also seeks to address key challenges currently affecting youth, such as unemployment, education opportunities, young people's non-involvement in decision-making, AIDS and HIV, crime and general youth deviance, teenage pregnancy,

and drug and alcohol abuse. The Policy also advocates the rights and responsibilities of young people and the positive role models provided by adults and parents.

Realizing the role of independent youth organizations in complementing government efforts in youth development, the Malawi Government will soon enact a youth council act for the establishment of a National Youth Council. The Council, a non-governmental organization, will have as its main functions the development, promotion, encouragement and coordination of youth activities on a national basis and will aim to facilitate and encourage cooperation among the various youth organizations.

As indicated earlier, Malawi believes that young people have the potential to become a dynamic and positive force. Given the right conditions, young women and men are both willing and able to take responsibility for their lives and contribute positively to the society in which they live, both now and in the future. Total empowerment of youth is therefore the biggest challenge for all. Malawi is committed to investing in young women and men, as they are the nation of today and tomorrow.

The Government is committed to providing appropriate skills to young people through its Multiskills Training Centres. The Malawi Youth Credit Initiative will ensure that young people are provided with credit and training packages to enable them to enter into viable small business. In line with the International Youth Year's theme of participation, development, peace, Malawi youth will be provided with limitless opportunity to participate in decision-making at all levels.

It is against this backdrop that Malawi supports the adoption of the draft World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I now call on Mrs. Uraiwan Pichitakul, Deputy Secretary-General of the National Youth Bureau of Thailand.

Mrs. Pichitakul (Thailand): In observance of International Youth Year in 1985, Thailand joined the international community in launching a number of programmes and activities for youth both at the local and the national levels. In the same year, the Thai Government also declared 20 September of every year to be Thai National Youth Day in memory of the two former great kings who began their reign while they were very young. In view of social, economic and demographic changes, many child and youth development problems still remain from our previous Sixth Child and Youth Development Five-Year Plan, 1987-1991. The Thai Government is therefore still addressing the significant dimensions of the problems and needs of child and youth development during our current Seventh Child and Youth Development Plan, 1992-1996.

During the past 10 years, we have followed up and evaluated our national youth policies and programmes and have amended laws to catch up with the situation of youth. We are now in the process of carrying out studies to lay down the guidelines for the next Child and Youth Development Five-Year Plan, 1997-2001.

As for the observance this year of the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year we have organized a number of programmes such as the National Youth Forum, National Youth Week, a seminar on the role of youth in national development, workshops on Asia-Pacific youth and handicrafts, youth and tourism, and so on.

In conclusion, we believe that, with the continuing support of the United Nations, the situation of world youth will be improved. We are also convinced that the draft World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond will be observed and largely implemented by all Member States for the development of the young generation of the world.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I now call on the representative of Sudan, Mr. Mohamed.

Mr. Mohamed (Sudan) (*interpretation from Arabic*): Ten years ago, I was a student at university and was one of the members of this youth segment which we are discussing now. Among the representatives of youth to come to speak about youth in their countries, I am witness to the past 10-year period both in my country and in this Organization.

For the representatives of all countries of the world to meet to reflect on youth issues and to lay down plans and programmes for future generations is indeed an expression of the determination of the international community to pay special attention to this important segment which constitutes the heart and the aspirations of society for the future. The international conferences which have been held recently have devoted a great deal of space in their programme of action to the problems of

youth. This highlights the increasing attention paid to this segment.

The commemoration of the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year is an adequate opportunity to reflect and take stock of the situation and to prepare programmes and plans for future generations. The progress of nations can only be accomplished through relying on the vitality and the strength of youth who are aspiring for social changes and progressive renewal which contributes to the present and to the future. The vitality of a nation lies in the vitality of its youth. Therefore, we have to prepare them to shoulder this responsibility.

Youth welfare in Sudan is a public responsibility shouldered by the State, private bodies and youth organizations, together with families and individuals. The national strategy adopted by my country for the next 10 years had devoted a full chapter to youth. It enumerated the general principles for promoting youth activities, namely, the human aspect through the enjoyment of rights and fulfilling duties. It pointed out the principle of democracy built on equality among all sectors of youth, and adopting the scientific approach in theory and in practice; the principle of respect of work and its value as the essential factor in life; the principles of valuing life as a blessing of God Almighty; the principle of integration and equilibrium as it includes all the cultural, social and economic levels, and the principle of dialogue and exchanging views to promote the cohesion of Sudanese society and profound understanding of all contemporary generations.

The strategy has identified the following areas for youth. Firstly, in the cultural and intellectual area, as it constitutes the vision which guides youth in all areas; secondly, in the aesthetic field, art and literature are the essential pillars of culture; thirdly, science as the basis of progress in our present generation which is witnessing growing scientific progress; fourthly, sports and military fields; fifthly, public social service, and finally, the field of trips and touristic activities and hostels.

In the field of youth organizations, youth in Sudan are grouped under a wide umbrella, namely, the organization of the youth of the nation, in addition to student associations in universities and secondary schools in all the provinces of Sudan and in the field of education. In spite of the difficult economic circumstances, my country has also established during the last five years, 20 universities in all the provinces.

Basic education will be mandatory for all children of school age, starting from next year. These new universities are spread all over the provinces and include girls and boys. For example, the number of girl students in Sudanese universities is more than 60 per cent of that of young men.

In the field of training, my country has established a number of vocational training centres in addition to clubs and associations and youth organizations and national non-governmental organizations. In the field of combating crime, drugs and vice, youth in Sudan are imbued with the virtues of the teachings of Islam. Those values are deeply rooted in Islam which condemns delinquency and calls for cooperation and compassion in society.

Finally, I should like to point out that 85 per cent of the world's youth live in developing countries which are burdened with foreign debts and poverty, lack of financial resources and disease. Therefore, the majority of world youth, most of whom live in developing countries, do not face the problems of reproductive health or any other abnormalities. What they really face are intricate economic problems which threaten their future. When tackling youth issues, we should focus on the problems of young people themselves and not focus on other issues which are not connected with youth.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I now call on Mr. Fabrizio Macor-Pellisero, Director for Youth, Ministry of Family Affairs of Venezuela.

Mr. Macor-Pellisero (Venezuela) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Young people are fundamental in building the present and the future of society — above all its present. None the less, it is clear that, to a great extent, they are shut out of the opportunities offered by society as regards education, employment, health, recreation, food, access to an appropriate physical environment, human rights, participation in the decision-making process and possibilities for association.

Hence, the draft Declaration of Intent on Youth refers to: attainment of an educational level commensurate with their aspirations; access to employment opportunities equal to their abilities; food and nutrition adequate for full participation in the life of society; a physical and social environment that promotes health and protection from disease and addiction; human rights and fundamental freedoms without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion; participation in decision-

making processes, including the right voluntarily to join representative and democratic youth organizations; and places and facilities for cultural and sports activities to improve the living standards of young people.

In Venezuela, one of the areas in which youth are most often left on the sidelines is education. Access to education does not measure up to the expectations of young people. In fact, in Venezuela 40.5 per cent of young people are engaged in study, and only 4.2 per cent of those who are not studying feel that they have completed their education. This situation is an important source of frustration among young people, and it can be attributed to the combined effect of high educational expectations and of the difficulties involved in obtaining schooling.

According to the poll on youth conducted by the Ministry of Family Affairs, the reasons for not studying are diverse. Economic considerations are the most important of these, affecting 50 per cent of young people; 27.5 per cent say that they left school because of lack of resources, and 23.1 per cent because they needed to work. Another important, and interesting factor is that the educational system is not highly valued. In the case of 13.6 per cent of young people, this is a reason for cessation of studies. Poor performance combined with other problems is the reason given by 11.3 per cent of young people who say that they are not studying, and lack of school availability applies to 8.8 per cent. Health problems affect 3.3 per cent, and pregnancy 5.7 per cent.

In the second half of 1994 the national labour force comprised approximately 8 million persons, a quarter of them young people. However, whereas the overall rate of unemployment was 8.5 per cent, the rate for young people was 15.5 per cent. In other words, the number of unemployed young people was 1.8 times that of unemployed adults in general.

Young people are in an unfavourable situation in other areas too. But the important thing is that there be solutions and policies that can be applied. In the case of the State of Venezuela, the policies directed towards the youth sector can be divided into two major groups: those intended to deal with the problem of integrating youth — policies through which Venezuela can assume its responsibilities towards young people; and those relating to the participation of young people, for building society through the involvement of youth.

The Ministry of Family Affairs is the guiding body for policies designed to care for families and their members. At the beginning of the 1990s we promoted the development of youth policies and programmes geared towards creating valid options to deal with the problems of that sector of the population. As a country, we were innovative in developing programmes for the socio-cultural participation of young people, and at present we are using our experience by adapting programmes as necessary.

A clear demonstration of the importance that the Government of President Caldera attaches to the problems of young people is the establishment of a governmental forum to deal with youth issues and to support the activities of the Ministry of Family Affairs. Likewise, there is a range of specialized institutions dealing with different aspects of the problems of youth.

Activities in the field of youth have priority in the nation's current plan as part of its development process. These are undertaken through various programmes. In the field of education, we have formal programmes for basic, intermediate, professional, technical and university training. By way of support for formal education, we have a programme of student tutors.

In the area of health, let me emphasize our programmes of comprehensive health care, the mental health assistance programme for children and young people, the programme for the prevention of grade repetition, school leaving and poor school performance, the programme for the prevention of accidents and violence and the national programme for the prevention of early pregnancy.

In the area of job training and qualification, a number of activities have been undertaken through various programmes carried out by different national and regional bodies; these include our adolescent and youth training and qualification programme; and the social integration programme for young people, which began in 1992. In 1995, help is being given to 45,000 young people between 15 and 27 who are uneducated, poor and unemployed or with precarious employment. This programme puts strong emphasis on comprehensive training, and it encourages the inclusion of young people in adult training systems or in the job market.

We also have a programme of job training for youths, which is at an experimental stage. Financed by the Inter-American Development Bank, this programme is aimed at developing, on an experimental basis, the outlines for the training, labour, business and follow-up

components of a national system of youth incorporation. It offers equivalency courses to young people between the ages of 18 and 24 in the Caracas metropolitan area — a very sensitive area of our country — who have had less than nine years of schooling, are uneducated and live in poverty.

Our training programmes are of special importance, because they involve the business community and society in general; it is thus, and especially through non-governmental organizations, that we are creating a network of unified training organizations to meet the national requirements for the training of young people on the basis of shared responsibility.

In the area of prevention also we have a set of programmes to provide opportunities for young people in extreme poverty, with the object of reducing the trend towards disorder. These include the preventive programme for young people, the programme for youth participation and associations, the preventive programme for minors and programmes for abandoned and endangered minors. We also have a State body for sports policy. Among the most important innovations is the use of sports policy as a preventive policy through programmes for performance in sports, for competitive sports, sports for all, sports for health and recreational sports.

We also have a programme of youth rehabilitation and supervised recreation. This programme, run by various bodies under the Ministry of Family Affairs, makes it possible to safeguard integral child development, making efficient use of resources and services required by communities, and facilitates school enrolment.

Drug prevention programmes are particularly important for a country like ours. Aimed to confront this terrible scourge, the Ministry of Family Affairs established the José Félix Ricas Foundation in 1986 for prevention, rehabilitation and scientific research into the use and abuse of narcotic and psychotropic substances. This work is geared especially towards people between the ages of 7 and 25. The Ministry develops programmes in three areas — treatment, prevention and research — with direct support from governmental organizations and from communities. It has been taking preventive action through workshops in marginal urban areas.

In the cultural area, one of our great successes has been the programme of national youth and children's orchestras, which brings together 110,000 young children in 196 groups throughout the country, and 80,000 older youths through the system of youth orchestras. Its contribution to training, direction and evaluation of musical training is part of our policy of prevention in respect of youth, just as the system of youth and children's orchestras is a part of our policy of integral development.

Venezuela's concern with various types of human resources training for national development is indicated by the creation of the Gran Mariscal de Ayacucho Foundation, through which highly qualified personnel are trained at home and abroad, as well as at the national level.

With regard to future prospects, Venezuela has deep-seated democratic convictions which oblige us to address our economic and social problems in a spirit of compromise and to open up new opportunities for young people and give them new hope. The daily exercise of freedom is a challenge to our capacity for innovation, as is the commitment to knowledge and information that makes us a society that is always learning: learning to work; learning to do research; learning to compete and cooperate, and to create a constant new capacity for learning.

Poverty is a barrier to opportunity, but it can also be a challenge to create options for a different world. Nevertheless, we must not forget that, today, the community and international cooperation require the development of different options, in spite of the difficulties that the countries of our region confront, and especially in spite of the risks posed by hedonistic values and a consumer society to youthful dreams.

President Caldera, in a recent statement in this forum, recalled the major challenges we face. We must create; we must build; we must innovate. Today the words of Simón Rodríguez, the teacher of the Liberator Simón Bolívar, are more significant than ever: "We must invent or fail."

The Acting President *(interpretation from French)*: I now call on the representative of Egypt, Mr. Eldeeb.

Mr. Eldeeb (Egypt) *(interpretation from Arabic)*: We meet today to commemorate the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year — in confirmation of the interest of our Governments in the issues of youth who are the core of the social movement in each society.

Youth are the leaders of the future and they are the focus of our hope in achieving a society characterized by social peace and political stability in a world which enjoys peace and security in a framework of tolerance and goodwill and collaboration that would lead to the establishment of a new world order on the basis of the objectives set forth by the United Nations Charter 50 years ago.

Youth constitute the creative element in every society and perform a basic role in the comprehensive development process at both the social and economic levels. Therefore, the international community should discharge its obligations towards youth by paying sufficient heed to the international programmes that aim at raising living standards and providing education opportunities, employment and health care for youth in order to enable them fully to participate in the lives of their societies. This can be achieved only by providing an environment that would lead to the achievement of the socio-economic development needed to enable society to overcome the hurdles that prevent the youth of any society from obtaining their fundamental requirements.

Therefore, the United Nations should focus on addressing the fundamental economic issues of youth and channel more assistance to the developing and, especially, the least developed countries, so that they may put in place genuine socio-economic development programmes and help the Governments of those countries provide basic food, education and health care and housing as well as productive employment opportunities for youth instead of ignoring those important issues and putting forward controversial issues like the freedom of sexual and reproductive relations and other such issues which the youth of our countries do not need to dwell on.

Therefore, we hope to see United Nations programmes of international cooperation in the area of youth focus on the genuine requirements of youth, in our developing countries so that the credibility of international cooperation within the framework of the United Nations becomes a reality.

Our high-level meeting today results from General Assembly resolution 49/152 which my delegation joined in sponsoring. This high-level meeting was preceded by a long process of preparation that began within the framework of the Social Development Commission and the delegation of Egypt had the honour of presiding over the open-ended working group on youth which laid down the foundation of the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond.

The report of the working group was referred to the Committee which commended it and referred it to the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session 1995 (document E/1995/24) in order to finalize the last part and refer it to the General Assembly for consideration during this high-level meeting as a prelude to its adoption it in accordance with the aforementioned General Assembly resolution.

The Economic and Social Council held its resumed substantive session on 25 October 1995 in order to consider the final draft of the international programme for youth but, unfortunately, the Council was unable during that session to reach consensus on the content of document E/1995/123. Therefore, the Council decided to refer the question in its entirety to the General Assembly to consider and take the necessary measures.

Let us face this situation with courage and speak with candour. The draft Working Programme of Action for Youth, in its general framework, is a good one that deserves support by all. Yet, the few controversial paragraphs which have been inserted recently include a new formulation that goes beyond the international drafting which was adopted in the aforementioned conferences. In particular, we refer to the three paragraphs numbered 56, 57, 58 in the draft text which deal with the sexual and reproductive issues in a manner that overlooks a basic fact which should be respected. This fact is that various legal systems are applied in various countries and in different regions of the world. Such a fact underscores the need to respect and to take into consideration the historic religious and cultural characteristics of the peoples of every region when drafting any international document, so that the door may not be left ajar for the introduction of controversial issues after international compromises had been reached on such issues in previous conferences.

During the negotiating process the delegation of Egypt spared no effort in trying to ensure that the wording of the final draft of the World Programme of Action for Youth was going to reflect the international consensus which was reached at the Conference on Population and Development held in Cairo in 1994 on the international issues related to sexual and reproductive issues as they are recorded in the report of that Conference.

Unfortunately, this did not materialize, owing to the insistence of some parties in the negotiation process on imposing a new concept of consensus. The delegation of Egypt would like to avail itself of this opportunity to stress that whatever the linguistic formulas may be, its concept of the operative content of the paragraphs relating to reproductive and sexual health, especially paragraphs 56, 57 and 58, is that their implementation will take place in accordance with the legal system and the cultural and religious heritage of each society. Therefore, Egypt will apply the content of these paragraphs in accordance with the rules of Islamic Shariah and the basic legal rules in force in Egypt.

Youth in all Member States is looking to us. Therefore the General Assembly should perform its role to the full. We meet today at the level of a high-level international conference which, we believe, could yield fruitful results if we begin immediately to tackle the pending issues which are few in number, with the usual international procedure. That is, we should consider the contents of the draft World Programme of Action in this Assembly in a transparent, democratic fashion that would lead to genuine consensus in accordance with the rules of United Nations international conferences.

The delegation of Egypt wishes to propose, at this point, the convening today of an open-ended consultation meeting under the leadership of the President or a Vice-President of the Assembly so that the General Assembly may consider the draft of the World Programme of Action in a first reading, since the draft has not yet been considered by the General Assembly in a first reading. This is the customary procedure followed in all international conferences before the adoption of any international programme. The aim would be to revise the few points that call for revision in the controversial paragraphs, so that the Assembly may consider the final draft of the World Programme of Action at its high-level meeting with a view to adopting it by consensus.

We are confident that there is a real opportunity for us to overcome the problem of redrafting the few controversial paragraphs I have mentioned. This could be done simply by adhering to the language that was agreed after painstaking efforts at the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, as contained in the report of that Conference, without in any way introducing any controversial wording or concepts.

Egypt devotes special attention to youth issues and accords them top priority in its public policy and the various executive programmes of the Government that aim at achieving social integration and at raising the standard of living of all segments of society. The Egyptian Government has adopted an ambitious programme to combat poverty and achieve comprehensive social development on the occasion of the 1996 International Year to Eradicate Poverty. All organs of the Government now cooperate in the implementation of this development programme and elicit the participation of all non-governmental organizations engaged in voluntary work in this field. In this context, Egypt urges the international community to consolidate all international cooperation programmes that aim at youth welfare, especially in developing countries, in order to help those countries carry out their programmes in reaffirmation of international interest in youth issues throughout the world.

While on the subject of youth issues, we should refer to the importance of devoting special attention to the neediest categories of society, especially the handicapped and those who live in rural areas in which only basic services are available to the young, as well as the inhabitants of areas with particular difficulties, such as those under occupation and those afflicted by armed conflicts.

In conclusion, we hope that the year 2000, to which the World Programme of Action is looking, will see the resolution of all youth priority issues through concerted international efforts and through the cooperation of United Nations bodies and specialized agencies with the Governments of Member States, and with the real and effective participation of non-governmental organizations so that the goals we set at the world Summit, including the integration of young people in the activities of their societies may be achieved as we approach the twenty-first century.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): We have heard the last speaker for today's meeting devoted to the celebration of the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year.

Before adjourning the meeting, I should like to inform Members that, as it appears that further consultation on the draft World Programme of Action is needed, action on the draft will therefore be taken at a later date, to be announced.

I will now adjourn this meeting and proceed immediately to the special briefing by non-governmental youth organizations to hear the remaining speakers.

The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.